(b) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRYOF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDI): (a) and (b) Under the current Exim Policy, import of fresh garlic is restricted and can be imported only against a specific import licence. No licence/permission has been given to the Government of Karnataka for import of Fresh Garlic during the current licensing year as they have not applied for any such license.

Increase in the price of paper by major companies

1216. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the major paper producing companies *viz.*, JK and Ballarpur have increased the price of paper three-four times this year;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) the impact of increase in the price of paper of the text books of schools and colleges; and

(d) the steps being taken to reduce the price of paper?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (DR. RAMAN SINGH): (a) to (d) Paper Industry is a delicensed one. There is no statutory control over prices of paper which are driven by the market forces. J.K. Paper Limited and Ballarpur Industries Limited have informed that they increased the price of paper manufactured by them to certain extent during this year. Information regarding price of text book of schools and colleges is not centrally maintained in this Department.

Applications pending with DGFT

1217. SHRI S. AGNIRAJ: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the number of applications pending with DGFT for fixation of input/output norms and DEPB rates;

(b) whether it is a fact that it takes more than 3/6 months before an application is cleared;

(c) the reasons for the inordinate delay in this regard; and

(d) the steps being taken to clear applications expeditiously to help exporters?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDI): (a) to (d) There were 137 and 26 applications respectively pending for fixation of standard input output norms and DEPB rates. Though every effort is made to dispose of the applications within the time frame laid down, yet in some cases more time is taken for fixation of Standard Input Output Norms and DEPB rates because of deficient/incomplete information submitted by the applicants and time taken by the concerned Administrative Ministries/Departments in formulating their comments after detailed technical examination of the applications.

For expeditious disposal of applications, the technical information that are required for fixation of Input Outpur Norms and DEPB rates have been clearly laid down in the Exim Policy/procedures. Further the procedures are regularly simplified and streamlined to avoid delay in disposal of such proposals.

Import of foodgrains, vegetables, etc.

1218. SHRI MATILAL SARKAR: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the details of quantity of foodgrains, vegetables, milk powder and tea imported during the period between 1st April, 2001 and 30th September, 2002;

(b) the names of the countries from where these commodities are imported; and

(c) the adverse effect on the prices of the domestic commodities, if any, during this period?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDI): (a) and (b) The details of country-wise data on imports of foodgrains, vegetables, milk powder and tea are contained in the publication "Monthly Statistics of Foreign Trade of India: Volume-II (Imports)" published by Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics, which is available in the library of the Parliament. Latest released issue rates to July 2002.

(c) There was no adverse effect on domestic prices of essential commodities including foodgrains, vegetables and tea due to imports.

Misuse of funds for development of NER

†1219. SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA: Will the Minister of DEVELOPMENT OF NORTH EASTERN REGION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a substantial part of the funds granted for development of the North Eastern Region is embezzled;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.